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PROSPECTUS OF THE AMERICAN TELEGRAPH.

A Newspaper Published Daily and Weekly at Washington City.

It is alleged by their advocates that the late measures, called a Compromise, should be a satisfactory and final adjustment of the slavery question. They cannot become so otherwise than by uniting and consolidating the South in support of their rights, and by harmonizing the conflicting sectional interests which have arrayed the North against the South.

The result of the late elections proves that the South are attached to the Union, and wish to harmonize with the North. To reconcile conflicting opinions, and secure concert and unanimity, there must be mutual confidence and good-will. This is impossible, unless the sections deal fairly and justly towards each other. The true end of government is to protect persons and property. In the South slaves are property, and the South demand the peaceable and quiet possession of such property. Their right to hold slaves as property is denied by the Abolitionists of the North, who, that they may more efficiently control public opinion in that section, have organized themselves into religious and political combinations. They act through the press, the pulpit, and the ballot-box. Such an organization in one section makes it indispensable that there should be a counter organization in the other; because, if not resisted by such counter organization, the inevitable consequence would be that the Northern organization would absorb and control the entire public sentiment, social, moral, religious, and political, of that section. The purpose of the Northern organization is to assail the rights and interests of the South: the purpose of the Southern organization should be to protect the interests thus assailed.

Late events prove that the North are so deeply interested in preserving their present political and commercial relations to the South, that a powerful, influential, and controlling party can be rallied in that section, who will unite with the South in defence of their rights, if the South will itself become united, and, when united, act in concert with that Northern party who give the strongest and most reliable guaranties to the South. Can this be done? We believe it can. To aid in doing it, the "American Telegraph" will take an active part in the next Presidential election. It will urge the South to unite upon the republican basis of '98, and to send, in good faith, a full and able representation to the Baltimore Convention, under a belief that the Democracy of the North will unite with them in the nomination of candidates entitled to their confidence and support; and who, if elected, will exert the power and influence of the federal government to protect the rights and property of the South.

That the people may act understandingly, we invite a full and candid investigation of the merits and qualifications of those who may be presented as candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency. As the nominations, if properly made, will receive the support of the republican party, this examination of the merits of candidates must be made before the meeting of the convention; and that the "Telegraph" may give more efficient aid in that discussion, we propose to issue a weekly super-royal sheet, in quarto, at the reduced price of one dollar per annum. This weekly paper will become a valuable book of reference, containing the facts and arguments relating to the Presidential election, and much other political and general intelligence, with a carefully-prepared index.

Postmasters and republican committees are requested to act as agents.

TERMS.

Daily, on a super-royal sheet, at five dollars per annum.

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Railroad Convention.

We would call the attention of the public generally, and especially of all persons immediately interested in Railroads, to the Circular to the Presidents of Railroad Companies from the committee of the meeting held in this city on the 3d inst. We understand that the meeting adjourned until the first Tuesday in March, that the great convention to be held at New Orleans on the first Monday in January may act upon the proposed modification of the laws regulating mail contracts. It is hoped that the adjourned meeting will be fully attended, and that Railroad Companies who cannot conveniently send delegates will authorize their members of Congress or some one else to represent them.

[Circular.]

WASHINGTON CITY, Dec. 10, 1851.

Sir: By the enclosed proceedings of a meeting held in this city on the 3d inst., it was made the duty of the undersigned as a committee to correspond with the several railroad companies in the United States, and to report to an adjourned meeting, to be held in this city on the first Tuesday in March next, to consider a proposition to petition Congress for a change in the law regulating mail contracts, so as to enable the Post Office Department to deliver to railroad companies United States five per cent. coupon bonds, upon permanent contracts for carrying the mail, to an amount the interest upon which, at five per cent., would be equal to the payments to be made under existing laws; and they therefore respectfully call the attention of your company to the subject, and invite your co-operation. They greatly prefer that you should send delegates to the adjourned meeting; for the opinions expressed by a convention of practical men, representing so much wealth, enterprise, and intelligence, will command, as they will deserve, the confidence and respect of Congress, and thus promote the adoption of such details as may be agreed upon in convention; but if it should not be convenient to send delegates, we would ask your company to submit, through us, your wishes and opinions upon the main proposition, and upon the details connected therewith.

It is well known that many persons are opposed to internal improvements by the general government—some denying the power of Congress to make appropriations for that object; others fearing that the exercise of such power would lead to combinations resulting in partial and unjust legislation. It will be seen that the proposition under consideration is free from these objections. It asks no appropriation of money in aid of the construction of railroads. The contracts will be restricted to the service which the several railroad companies are in condition to execute when the payments are made.

It is true that the proposed modification of the laws regulating mail contracts will give similar payments *pro rata*, as new roads are made and as old ones are extended, and will so far increase the credit and resources of railroad companies. The same effect, although to a less extent, results from existing laws, and surely it cannot be urged as a valid objection to the proposed change that it will aid in the extension of the railroad system. We claim as a merit, that the proposed modification will aid in extending the system by giving greater value to railroad investments. Under existing laws contracts are made for four years, and the payments are continued, if not increased at infinitum. Under the proposed modification the contracts will be made, giving the United States the perpetual use of railroads; and the rate of compensation is so reduced that, at the end of thirty-three years, the payments will cease, and the department will forever thereafter have the use of such railroad free of all charge.

It is objected that old routes may be superseded by new ones, and the present service so diminished as to render it inexpedient to make permanent contracts at the rates proposed. It has also been objected that railroads now in use may be discontinued, and that such railroad companies cannot protect the department from loss. We answer these objections by assuming that the

AMERICAN TELEGRAPH.

THE PAUPER'S DEATH-BED.

BY MRS. SOUTHEY.

Tread softly—how the head—

In reverent silence bow—

No passing bell doth toll—

Yet an immortal soul

Is passing now.

Stranger! however great,

With holy reverence bow;

There's one in that poor shed—

One by that paltry bed—

Greater than thou.

Beneath that beggar's roof,

Lo! death doth keep his state;

Enter—no crowd attend;

Enter—no guards defend

This palace gate.

That pavement, damp and cold,

No smiling courtiers tread;

One silent woman stands,

Lifting with meager hands

A dying head.

No mingling voices sound—

An infant wall alone;

A sob suppress'd—again

That short, deep gasp, and then

The parting groan.

Oh! change—Oh! wondrous change—

Burst are the prison bars—

This moment there, so low,

So agonized, and now

Beyond the stars.

Oh! change—stupendous change!

There lies the soulless clod;

The Sun eternal breaks;

The new immortal wakes—

Wakes with his God.

MAGLIABECCHI'S PRODIGIOUS MEMORY.

Magliabechi was born at Florence, on the 29th of October, 1633. His parents were of so low and mean a rank, that they were well satisfied when they had got him into the service of a man who sold greens. He had never learned to read, and yet he was perpetually poring over the leaves of old books that were used as waste paper in his master's shop.

A bookseller who lived in the neighborhood, and who had often observed this, and knew the boy could not read, asked him what he meant by looking so much at the printed paper. He said that he did not know how it was, but that he loved it of all things; that he was very uneasy in the business he was in, and should be the happiest creature in the world, if he could live with him, who had always so many books about him. The bookseller was pleased with his answer, and at last told him that, if his master was willing to part with him, he would take him.

Young Magliabechi was highly delighted, and the more so when his master, at the bookseller's request, gave him leave to go. He went, therefore, directly to his new and much-desired business, and had not been long in it, before he could find any book that was asked for, as readily as the bookseller himself. Some time after this he learned to read, and from this time forth, whenever he could find a moment's leisure, he was found with a book in his hand.

He seems never to have applied himself to any particular study. An inclination for reading was his ruling passion, and a prodigious memory his great talent. He read every book, almost indifferently, as they happened to come into his hands, and that with a surprising quickness, and yet retained not only the sense, but often all the words, and the very manner of spelling.

His extraordinary application and talents soon recommended him to Ermini, librarian to the Cardinal of Medicis, and Marmi, the great Duke's librarian. He was by them introduced into the conversations of the learned, and made known at Court; and he began to be looked upon everywhere as a prodigy, particularly for his vast and unbounded memory.

It is said that there was a trial made of the force of his memory, which, if true, is very amazing. A gentleman of Florence, who had written a piece which was to be printed, lent the manuscript to Magliabechi, and some time after it had been returned, went to him, with a melancholy face, and pretended to have met with a most unhappy accident, by which, he said, he had lost his manuscript. The author seemed almost inconsolable for the loss of his work, and entreated Magliabechi to try to recollect as much of it as he possibly could, and write it down. Magliabechi assured him he would, and, on setting about it, wrote down the whole manuscript, without missing a word.

By treasuring up everything he read in so strange a manner, or at least the subject and all the principal parts of the books he ran over, his head became, at last, as one of his acquaintances expressed himself, "a universal index, both of titles and matter."

By this time Magliabechi was grown so famous for the vast extent of his reading, and his amazing retention of what he read, that it began to grow common among the learned to consult him when they were writing on any subject. Thus, for instance, if a priest was composing a panegyric on a particular saint, Magliabechi would, on his applying to him, inform him what writers had spoken favorably of the saint, and in what part of their works the commendations were to be found—in some cases to the number of above one hundred authors. He would tell him not only who had treated of his subject expressly, but also who had only touched upon it accidentally, in writing upon other subjects; both which he did with the greatest exactness, naming the author, the book, the words, and often the very number of the pages in which they were inserted. He did this so often, so readily, and so exactly, that he came at last to be looked upon almost as an oracle.

Later, he read the title-pages only; then dipped here and there into the preface, dedication, and advertisements if there were any, and then cast his eyes on each of the divisions, and different sections or chapters of the book; and thus he conceived the matter almost as completely as if he had read it at full length.

Magliabechi, "it is impossible; for there is but one in the world; that is in the Grand Seigneur's library at Constantinople, and is the seventh book, on the seventh shelf, on the right hand as you go in."

Although Magliabechi lived so sedentary a life, and studied so intensely, he arrived to a good old age. He died in his eighty-first year, on July 14, 1714. By his will he left a very fine library, of his own collection, for the use of the public, with a fund to maintain it; and the surplus, if any, to be given to the poor.

He was not an ecclesiastic, but chose never to marry; and was negligent, even to slovenliness, in his dress. His appearance was such as must have been far from engaging the affections of a lady; and his face, in particular, judging from the representations of him in busts, medals, and portraits, would have rather prejudiced his suit than advanced it. He received his friends, and those who came to consult with him on any points of literature, in a civil and obliging manner; though, in general, he had almost the air of a savage, and even affected it.

In his manner of living he affected the character of Diogenes; three hard eggs and a draught or two of water were his more usual repast. When any one went to see him, he was found lying in a sort of fixed wooden cradle, in the middle of his study, with a multitude of books—some thrown in heaps, and others scattered about the floor—all round him; and this his cradle, or bed, attached to the nearest pile of books by a number of cobwebs. At the entrance of visitors, he was accustomed to call out to them not to hurt his spiders.

Thus lived and died Magliabechi, in the midst of public applause, and with such an affluence, for all the latter part of his life, as very few persons have ever procured by their knowledge or learning.

His vast knowledge of books induced Cosmo III to do him the honor of making him his librarian; and what a happiness it must have been to Magliabechi, who delighted in nothing so much as reading, to have the command of such a collection of books as that in the great Duke's palace. He was also very conversant with the books in the Lorenzo library, and had the keeping of those of Leopoldo and Francesco Maria, the two Cardinals of Tuscany.

And yet even all this did not satisfy his extensive appetite; for he had read almost all books that is, the greatest part of those printed before his time, and all in it; for it was latterly a general custom, not only among authors, but of the printers, too, of those times, to make him a present of a copy of whatever they published.

It is worthy of remark that the Duke of Tuscany, as Magliabechi assured Lord Raley, had become jealous of the attention he was receiving from foreigners, as those literary strangers usually went first to see Magliabechi before they called on the Grand Duke.

From the London Athenaeum.

THE CATACOMBS OF ROME.

The *Revue des Deux Mondes* gives an account of the researches of M. Perret in the Catacombs of Rome, which will interest our readers. It appears that the antiquarian in question has been engaged for six years in exploring the catacombs, and in copying the remains of ancient art hidden for ages in those extraordinary chambers. Burying himself for five years in this subterranean city, he has examined every part of it, in spite of difficulties and perils of the gravest character: the refusal of his guides to accompany him, the intricacy of the passages, the necessity for clearing a way through galleries choked up with earth which fell in from above almost as fast as it was removed—the difficulty of damming up streams of water which ran in from above, the foulness of the air, and consequent difficulty of breathing and preserving light in the lower chambers.

During his long sojourn in the nether regions, M. Perret succeeded in exploring the whole of the sixty chambers and their connecting galleries; and he has now returned to France with a collection of drawings which extends to 360 sheets in large folio. Of these, 154 sheets contain representations of frescoes; 65 of monuments; 23 of paintings on glass (medallions inserted in the walls and at the bottom of vases), containing 86 subjects; 41 drawings of lamps, vases, rings, and instruments of martyrdom; to the number of more than 100 subjects; and, finally, 90 contain copies of more than 500 sepulchral inscriptions. Of the 154 drawings of frescoes, two-thirds are inédits, and a considerable number have been only lately discovered. Amongst the latter, as we learn from the *Revue*, are the paintings from the celebrated wells of Platonina, said to have been the place of interment, for a certain period, of St. Peter and St. Paul. This spot was ornamented with frescoes by Pope Damasus, about A. D. 365, and has ever since remained closed up. On opening the empty tomb, by permission of the Roman Government, M. Perret discovered fresco paintings, representing the Saviour and the Apostles, and two coffins of Parian marble. It is stated, that on the return of M. Perret to France, the Minister of the Interior entered into treaty with him for the acquisition of his collection for the nation. The purchase has been arranged, and the necessary amount, upwards of £7,500, obtained by a special vote of the National Assembly. The drawings will be published by the French Government in a style commensurate with their importance.

EARLY RISING.—Happy the man who is an early riser. Every morning day comes to him with a virgin lute, full of bloom, and purity, and freshness. The copy of nature is contagious, like the gladness of a happy child. I doubt if any man can be called "old," so long as he is an early riser and an early walker. And a youth—take my word for it—a youth in dressing gown and slippers, dawdling over breakfast at noon, is a very decrepit, ghastly image of that youth which sees the sun blush over the mountains, and the dew sparkle upon blossoming hedge-rows—*Water Cure Library*.

FREE BLACKS.—A number of respectable citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, publish a card in the papers of that city, in which they say that, being satisfied that the accumulation of the free people of color in that State is just cause of solicitude to every lover of his country, and that their removal to Liberia will be alike beneficial to the whites, to them, and their children, as well as to Africa, they recommend a meeting to consult on the expediency and practicability of establishing a State Colonization Society, for the purpose of aiding free persons of color to remove from that State to Liberia.

ILLUSTRATION OF FAITH.

"Father," said a little Welsh boy to his parent, who had been explaining the Scriptures to his family, in the hall of what was once the manor-house, but which was then occupied by a farmer—"Father, you said you would one day, when I was old enough, teach me what Faith is. Am I old enough now?"

"Well, I think you are, Willy. Come to me," said his father, rising from his chair.

The boy no sooner approached, than his father raised him from the ground, and set him on the top of a double chest of drawers that stood beside the wall. The child's color went and came, and he was evidently afraid to stand upright in so unusual a situation.

"Now, Willy," said his father, placing himself at a little distance, and holding out his arms, "Now, Willy, stand upright and jump into my arms."

The child's position and the father's command were alike calculated to produce alarm, and did produce it. But the father's look was calm, and kind, and serious, and the child had invited the lesson; so he had nothing for it but to turn his mind to compliance.

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BY MRS. SOUTHEY.

Tread softly—how the head—

In reverent silence bow—

No passing bell doth toll—

Yet an immortal soul

Is passing now.

Stranger! however great,

With holy reverence bow;

There's one in that poor shed—

One by that paltry bed—

Greater than thou.

Beneath that beggar's roof,

Lo! death doth keep his state;

Enter—no crowd attend;

Enter—no guards defend

This palace gate.

That pavement, damp and cold,

No smiling courtiers tread;

One silent woman stands,

Lifting with meager hands

A dying head.

No mingling voices sound—

An infant wall alone;

A sob suppress'd—again

That short, deep gasp, and then

The parting groan.

Oh! change—Oh! wondrous change—

Burst are the prison bars—

This moment there, so low,

So agonized, and now

Beyond the stars.

Oh! change—stupendous change!

There lies the soulless clod;

The Sun eternal breaks;

The new immortal wakes—